
Grant-Kohrs Ranch
National Historic Site

Comprehensive Interpretive Plan

Section One:
Long-Range Interpretive Plan

PREFACE

Two interpretive planning workshops, in June and August of 2002, were conducted to gather consensus foundational information on Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site's significance and apply that information to the development of the desired future interpretive program for the park. These were the key meetings that led to the park's first *Comprehensive Interpretive Plan*, of which this Long-Range Interpretive Plan is a part. The first workshop was attended by the entire planning group cited below. The second workshop, attended by the core team, developed this plan based on the work generated in the first workshop. Both workshops were facilitated by interpretive planners Richard Kohen and Kim Sikoryak from the Intermountain Support Office, Denver.

Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the participants, who gave freely of their time and expertise to forge this document. As the vision for the park's interpretive efforts over the next five to ten years, the Long-Range Interpretive Plan will be a much more effective and inclusive document due to their contributions.

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Carol Crockett	MTRI Coordinator	Travel Montana
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James Hill	Midwest Regional Coordinator	National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program
James R. Haas	Curator	Powell County Museum & Arts Foundation
Judy Rosen	Interpretive Specialist	Rocky Mountain National Park
Ken Soderberg	Visitor Services Bureau Chief	FWP [Scott—Is this Fish, Wildlife, and Parks]
Lyndel Meikle	Interpreter	Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site
Maline Bandy	Representative	Ranching Industry Local Cattlewomen
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Pat Hansen	Freelance Writer/Photographer Chair	Big Sky Draft Horse Exposition
Peggy Gow	Museum Technician	Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site
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INTRODUCTION

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan was developed by park staff with the assistance of park stakeholders. It serves as the long-range vision of the park's interpretive program for the next 5-10 years. This document, and the park's Annual Implementation Plans and Interpretive Database, constitute the park's first *Comprehensive Interpretive Plan*. The three-part *Comprehensive Interpretive Plan* is intended to define and guide the parkwide interpretive program consistent with the achievement of the park's goal for interpretation as described in the park's Strategic Plan: increasing people's understanding and appreciation of the significances of Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site.

FOUNDATIONAL INFORMATION

Statements of Significance

Statements of significance clearly define the most important things about the park's resources and values. They serve as the foundation for developing primary interpretive themes and desirable visitor experiences. Significance statements help park managers and staffs focus on the preservation and enjoyment of those attributes that directly contribute to the purpose of the park and that must be protected.

- Established by pioneer stockman John Grant, and subsequently expanded as the home and headquarters of influential cattleman Conrad Kohrs, Grant-Kohrs Ranch exemplifies successful cattle ranching operations in the American West from 1860 to 1920.
- Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site is the only unit of the National Park System specifically designated to commemorate the frontier cattle era, and its role in the larger and more complex history of the United States from the mid-19th to early 20th centuries.
- Due largely to the foresight and preservation efforts of Conrad and Nell Warren, Grant-Kohrs Ranch offers unparalleled opportunity to experience an authentic, living, evolving western ranch—encompassing historic landscapes, original buildings, furnishings, implements, and records spanning 130 years—rare in its integrity and completeness.
- The diversity of people and natural resources in the area were integral to the viability, scale, and success of the Grant-Kohrs Ranch and surrounding Deer Lodge Valley community.
- The near extermination of the native bison from the Northern Plains by the early 1880s created the opportunity for new lifestyles based on cattle ranching, while profoundly disrupting traditional Plains Indian lifeways.

Primary Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes convey park significance. Primary interpretive themes are the key ideas through which the park's nationally significant resource values are conveyed to the public. They connect park resources to the larger ideas, meaning, and values of which they are a part. They are the building blocks — the core content — on which the interpretive program is based. Each primary theme may connect to an unlimited number of specific stories or subthemes. These elements are helpful in designing individual services, ensuring that the main aspects of primary themes are addressed.

- A. The historical integrity and intactness of Grant-Kohrs Ranch facilitates a deeper understanding of the myths and realities of cattle ranching and the American West.
- B. The story of Conrad Kohrs' rise from hopeful emigrant to powerful cattle baron exemplifies the pursuit of the American Dream through flexibility, vision, determination, and good fortune.

- C. The relationship of the cultural and natural landscape at Grant-Kohrs Ranch provokes appreciation for the interconnectedness of all life; the direct human dependence on natural resources for food and other products; and the necessity of wise and sustainable resource stewardship to ensure continued prosperity.
- D. The history of Grant-Kohrs Ranch offers insights into how an enterprise often attributed to the effort of one person or family is inextricably tied to many people of diverse talents and backgrounds working together for individual and mutual advantage.
- E. The deliberate preservation of Grant-Kohrs Ranch by Conrad and Nell Warren — including original buildings, records, artifacts, and landscapes — represents values of historical awareness and respect, and connects to the larger idea of cultural memory and its preservation.

Interpretive Audiences

Interpretive audiences are those distinct groups of individuals for whom interpretive services are specifically designed. By definition, services designed specifically for one audience will be less effective for other audiences. The following is a list of specific audiences that this park's interpretive plan is designed to take into account. The numbers are used for identification only; they do not denote priority nor do they identify every group the park receives. However, the ones listed recognize those groups that require fundamentally different programs.

- **1. General Audience** (*Includes farmers and stock growers primarily from the Northwest, but nationally.*)
- **2. School Groups** (*Includes home schoolers. Special emphasis on grades 4 and 8.*)

Visitor Experience Considerations

The desired outcome of park operations is to manage visitor-resource interactions so that resources will remain unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations while ensuring that opportunities exist for the widest variety of current visitors to forge meaningful connections with those resources. The following list of visitor experience considerations, derived from park and stakeholder understanding of desired visitor experiences, serves to guide the development of services that will be offered as the park's desired future interpretive program.

- Visitors have a very strong desire for **hands-on experiences** related to authentic ranching, engaging all senses—especially experiences designed for the whole family, including kids.
- Visitors want to learn about ranching, and the wide range of people who lived here, through **living history activities**.
- Visitors want to **see and interact with animals** on the ranch.

Stakeholder Issues and Suggestions

A forum was provided for a stakeholder-park staff dialogue regarding the park's interpretive program. These observations and suggestions contribute to the informed environment within which the park's desired future interpretive program is constructed and upon which some future actions might be based.

Pat Hansen (Writer/Editor). Retain the viewshed. Work with neighbors, establish easements or perhaps purchase additional land.

Mary Fraley (Powell County Economic Development Corporation). Follow through on what we've done and planned—especially the hands-on activities.

Jim Haas (Powell County Museum & Arts Foundation). Let's foster more interaction between parks and other area attractions. We will all be more successful if we act symbiotically.

Dick Bauman (Powell County Museum & Arts Foundation). We are thankful for the park. The continuity of staff is desirable and important. I agree we need to work together and especially make connections with Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks to make our attractions better known to visitors to those places.

Maline Bandy (Local Cattlewomen). The county really isn't set up to encourage tourism. We need to provide opportunities for visitors to get a feel of the place.

Ken Soderberg (FWP). I agree with the need to continue to develop partnership ideas like shared entry passes, etc. Let's keep talking about ways to help generate revenues. Let's value each other as important to each other. I'd like to see the product of this effort, especially regarding visitor experience. Concentrate on what you want visitors to walk away with.

Tom Cook (Montana Historical Society). This experience has included a lot of valuable side conversations. History in Montana is an important and attractive story for visitors. We're all in this together. Let's share information and resources. Let's get the story right.

Sarah Bannon (Gold West Country). I'd like to see a statewide calendar, perhaps delivered via e-mail, to coordinate knowledge of events. This should include considerable detail about the activities associated with specific events. A shared quilt done by visitors would be a good idea.

Carol Crockett (Travel Montana). I've established a network (Montana Tourism & Recreation Initiative) with a number of partners to share energy to accomplish things. Scott is a member of this team representing the NPS.

Ben Bobowski (Resource Specialist, GRKO). There is lots of room to explore ties between the cattle industry and the environment—and tie to the local community. There

are a lot of local people with expertise that they would be willing to share—knowledge of the economic and social history of the area. We need to capture that before it's gone.

James Hill (National Underground Railroad, NPS). Take better advantage of the traffic along the Yellowstone-Glacier corridor. Partner more energetically with other local attractions. A searchable database of material culture should have links to out-of-park collections.

Judy Rosen (Rocky Mountain National Park, NPS). The Native American voice needs to be heard in the context of these resources. Include this integral component to the park story.

Carol Crockett (Travel Montana). There is a Montana Tribal Tourism Council that can help with that.

Mike McWright (Facility Management, GRKO). I agree we need to pursue partnerships. There are a lot of underutilized resources that could be shared.

Cindy Brandimarte (Texas Parks & Wildlife). The curatorial facility is impressive. It ties to the “preservation” theme. Can this be managed to provide an interpretive opportunity? This planning group worked well together.

Peggy Gow (Curation, GRKO). I'd like to see more involvement of the local community with the park, especially schools. Archives could be a valuable resource for school projects.

Chris Ford (Curator, GRKO). Curators have a reputation for hiding things away. I'd like to explore making the collections more accessible. It's hard to access some important aspects of the resource—like fencing and irrigation equipment. We need to learn more about other areas with resources like ours. The Montana Association of Museums is another organization that can help networking.

An open forum conversation followed with the following points being discussed.

Carol Crockett. Studies now show that people want relaxing, rather than hyperactive, vacations. Solitude, simplicity, and peace and quiet currently rank high in what vacationers are seeking.

Tom Cook. Montana has completed six “Main Street” books featuring profiles of historic towns. Deer Lodge would be a natural addition to that series.

Scott Eckberg. Several projects in Deer Lodge are underway. Among them are a downtown beautification project and a riverwalk development project.

James Haas. The museum has a scenic tour booklet describing an auto route popular with vacationers.

Carol Crockett. There is a need for better customer service for tourists to the area; even signage is uneven and hard to follow in some places.

Cindy Brandimarte. You have all of this wonderful public land; you just need to find ways to make it known and accessible.

Pat Hansen. Use the park to tell the big stories: where food and other resources come from, the value of maintaining open land, etc. This is important to the well-being of society, especially our children.

MANAGEMENT GOALS AND SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRAM

Management Goals for Interpretation

Interpretation operates within the larger environment of park management. A clear statement of what park management expects interpretation to contribute to the larger whole is requisite to the design of an interpretive program that will work in concert with other park operations to achieve the overall goals of the park.

The mission and role of interpretation:

- The mission of interpretation is to increase visitor understanding and appreciation of the significance of park resources. (Refer to the park *Strategic Plan*.)
- Interpretive services provide opportunities for people to forge their own intellectual and emotional connections with the ideas and meanings inherent in the resources of the park. (Refer to the Service Interpretive Development Program.)

The superintendent expects interpretation to accomplish the following for the park:

- Develop local and state support: be part of a seamless network of heritage resources with our partners and neighbors.
- Work within the park and with partners to provide curriculum-based educational services to teachers and students.
- Tie park resources to the land. Connect the park's stories to land use and land-use ethics.
- Make the park a safe place to visit; and do that interpretively by connecting visitor safety to the realities of ranch life.
- Understand the values of people and cultures; Plan interpretation to make the park more relevant to people. Make a personal connection to visitors, understand their values, meet their needs. Connect historic values of the ranch era folks to people's values today.
- Offer hands-on experiences: include sights, sounds, smells, touches, etc.
- Tell the site-specific story (the story of the particular history and significance of this ranch), but also convey the story of the NPS (both the System and the Service).

The purpose of the park:

- The purpose of Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site is to provide an opportunity for the public to understand the significance of the Nation's frontier cattle era [and its continuing evolution], to preserve the historic Grant-Kohrs Ranch, and to interpret its associated national values for the benefit of present and future generations.

Issues and Influences Affecting Interpretation

The park's interpretation operation is subject to internal and external constraints that affect its ability to accomplish the goal of enhancing public understanding and appreciation of park significances. A review

of those issues and influences currently affecting or expected to affect interpretation during the life of this plan allows the staff to predict and proactively address challenges to effective interpretation.

NPS Identity. Many people arrive at Grant-Kohrs Ranch without understanding that it is part of the National Park System. This probably indicates that many people traveling along the Yellowstone-Glacier corridor who would be attracted to an NPS site along their route don't stop because they are unaware that an NPS area exists in Deer Lodge. Partnering efforts helps with recognition locally. Networking and membership in local and state organizations can help. Shared training with other public service entities can also improve local/regional recognition.

Visitation and Advertising. The park has surprisingly few visitors, given the volume of traffic flow along the Yellowstone-Glacier highway corridor. About 6 million tourists travel that corridor annually, while the annual visitation to the ranch has recently been under 25,000. Present park advertising is minimal. The staffs at both YELL and GLAC are relatively unaware of the nature of the resources at GRKO. Consensus was that the park needs to partner with its big sisters more closely and find venues in and around both parks to get the word out about Grant-Kohrs Ranch. Local residents are also somewhat ambivalent about enhancing park visitation. Enhanced participation in community organizations could provide opportunities to help local residents to resolve their concerns about the benefits and liabilities of increased visitation.

Site Entrance Experience. A number of visitors stop in the parking lot, look at the waysides there, and go no farther. There is considerable misunderstanding about the nature of the site, how to get to the ranch proper, the nature of the contact station at the edge of the parking lot, etc. Before the construction of the new visitor center, thought must be given to clarifying the nature of the site upon first entrance, and maximizing the effectiveness of orientation information available at the contact station. The railroad tracks represent a substantial visual and behavioral barrier to the ranch, yet they are an important historic aspect of the ranch story, so their relocation would be problematic even if that option was more available. The layout of the site will be significantly impacted by the location of the new visitor center vis-à-vis these other components of the landscape.

Orientation to the Ranch Complex. The ranch is a very rich and complex site that most people cannot intuitively understand. Visitors need a comprehensive orientation to the site and its components for their visit to have enough context to lead to understanding. Providing this "big picture" overview of the site and the historic functions of its components may be a major role for the proposed visitor center.

Lack of Exhibit Space. The current lack of a visitor center restricts exhibits to the very small contact station, and more object-specific exhibits associated with park collections in the historic buildings. This once again emphasizes how important a visitor center will be, and how likely it will be a critical location for providing site context to visitors.

Visitor Center. A park visitor center is planned to fill the role currently only marginally fulfilled by the small contact station at the park entrance. No current visitor center exists. The proposed center will probably start construction during the life of this plan. The location, nature, and extent of some services currently offered may change when the role of the visitor center is better defined. The development of this comprehensive interpretive plan will aid in determining the function of the new facility.

Accessibility and Safety. Getting down to the ranch from the entry can be a challenge for seniors and others with limited mobility. Wherever there are animals, there is risk. “Hands-on” activities are inherently more risky, though their interpretive power is undeniable. The historic scene is not highly accessible, and has hazards that are not easy to ameliorate without impacting integrity. There are uneven surfaces, tripping hazards, and stairways. The urge to climb ranch fences can also pose hazards, especially to children. The proximity of an operating railway is also a concern.

Preservation can be at odds with accessibility. Curation is interested in making collections more accessible. Loans can help with this. Digitization of images and information can also offer access when the original object cannot be made available. Elevation, heat, aridity, and cold can all affect visitors’ ability to enjoy the site.

Park Web Page. Matt Conner manages, and has significantly upgraded, this resource. A new template for the front page is in the works nationally.

Signage. Upcoming mine remediation activities for the Superfund site along the river corridor will probably require some informational signing, particularly to inform local residents. The park is involved in the planning of these activities, so the chief ranger will have ample lead time to assure that this sort of coordination is accomplished in a timely manner.

Living Exhibits. People desire close contact with domestic stock maintained on the ranch. Park staff also feels that “hands-on” opportunities for visitors make for effective interpretation. Accommodating that desire safely and responsibly is a challenge. Close cooperation with resource management and facility management has been helping solve some challenges. Regarding historic breeds, the proper mix needs to be found to serve interpretation while being practical to manage. Although there are economic considerations having to do with acquiring and disposing of livestock, the prime motive for maintaining living collections must be to enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of the significance of the site. This also pertains to the growing of flower and vegetable cultivars in the ranch’s gardens. As with livestock, the varieties cultivated should be historic to the place and period, ideally the same varieties that were historically grown on the ranch. The proposed new visitor center may prove to be the best place to provide context to the park’s “living displays” thereby facilitating visitor understanding.

Staff Constraints. Most of the small staff’s public contact time is taken up by staffing the contact station at the edge of the parking lot, and leading guided interpretive programs in the ranch house. It’s unsure whether the new visitor center plan provides for additional

staffing. Partnering can and does help somewhat, including partnering internally with other park divisions to help with visitor services. Student interns are being explored for next year. The volunteer program is being expanded. Retirees are a good source of volunteers at this park. The historic Montana State Prison makes use of many volunteers. Other attractions also use volunteers. All partners will have to cooperate in the recruitment and use of volunteers to avoid competition, or the perception of competition, for volunteer resources.

Interpretive Programs in the Ranch House. Given the strong desire on the part of most visitors to see the interior of the ranch house, and the small staff size, the park is challenged to design this service to be as effective as possible. Interpretive programs in the ranch house could be led by others such as volunteers, docents, interns. One or more clear barriers could be installed, allowing some views of the house interior when guided tours are unavailable. Interpretive programs in the ranch house could be a fee-based activity to generate funds supporting the staff needed to guide the programs. There was consensus that interpretive programs in the ranch house could better connect with stories featured at other locations on the site. Overall, there are a number of related issues associated with interpretive programs in the ranch house that need to be resolved in relation to one another.

Fees. There is no park entrance fee. An earlier entrance fee program was discontinued since money received did not cover costs of collection. A fee for interpretive programs in the historic ranch house is possible, but the park is undecided whether an interpretive program in the historic ranch house is so basic to the understanding of park significance that it would be disadvantageous to charge a fee for this activity.

Donations. There is a donation box in the contact station. Consensus is that a donation box in the “photo room” on the ranch grounds would be much more successful.

Cooperating Association. Glacier Natural History Association is the park’s cooperating association partner. This is a good, well-established relationship. There is no cooperating association staff in the park; the visitor contact staff handles all sales. Lyndel Meikle is the park cooperating association coordinator. The park museum collection may lend inspiration to new sales items, especially thematic reproductions and similar items. There is currently no park-specific introductory publication offered for sale. The sales volume is quite modest. Cooperating association monetary support is about \$1100 to \$1200 per year. The only sales outlet currently in operation is at the contact station.

Hands-on Focus. There is strong consensus among park staff that interpretation should be strongly experiential to be effective at this park.

Relation of the Park Story to the Deer Lodge Community. It was stated that the community of Deer Lodge and park staff feel it is important to stress that the significance of the ranch story is strongly tied to the history of Deer Lodge. There was consensus that the park would provide the necessary context to help visitors make this connection, and this connection was strongly reflected in one of the park’s primary interpretive themes.

Broadening the Story. There is strong consensus that the park should be doing more to include the stories of women, the working class (in distinction to owners, etc.), and American Indians, as well as other groups. New research, new information, and new skills will need to be developed to accomplish this. And the challenge to devote more time and energy to such stories will mean that attention will have to be taken away from other work, or new resources will have to be found to extend capability.

Interpretive References — Resources for Interpretation

Resources supporting the interpretive effort and actions to strengthen that support are listed below. Action items identified by the core planning team are identified in ***bold italicized*** type.

Library

There is one general park library currently located at the headquarters building in downtown Deer Lodge. This collection could be moved to the park curatorial facility if and when the park moves forward with moving the headquarters operation to the Warren House.

The collection is small, under 1500 pieces, and is not supported by a dedicated budget. Check out of material is via the honor system, and this seems to be working satisfactorily. Staff consensus is that Web access has reduced the need for a large hard copy collection somewhat. The collection is characterized as under-managed and underutilized.

The responsibility for managing the library resides with Matt Conner's position, but at present the actual collection work is being done by Lyndel Meikel.

Small collections of subject-specific materials exist in staff offices, but these materials are not catalogued as part of the park library. An increasing collection of videotapes are stored with the library collection, but are not catalogued.

The library collection, including pamphlet files, are catalogued using the Dewey Decimal system. This includes some research files maintained in the Chief Ranger's and Curator's offices.

The support office staff in Santa Fe is a resource that can assist in the transfer of these materials to the Library of Congress catalog system, the NPS standard.

The staff needs to survey the current collection and identify and acquire new research and reference materials related to the ranch and its resources.

A better job needs to be done to ensure that new park studies are incorporated into the park library.

Library materials need to be reviewed to identify rare books; those need to be transferred to the museum collection and stored accordingly.

Image Collection

The park slide file is in poor collection and is seldom used. There is a multiplex storage cabinet, but there are few duplicates. Most original images are presently housed in the archival storage area. Negatives are currently stored with park archives. Prints of negatives are on file in the Chief Ranger's office.

The park is beginning to generate and acquire digital images, but there are no standard procedures for this activity, and the collection of digital images is not organized.

Staff needs to review images, eliminate useless images, and digitize and/or duplicate remaining master images to facilitate cataloguing and proper use.

The current finding aid for images (a flat-file database on dBase) is not easy to use. Staff needs to transfer this information to a database using Microsoft Access or the next generation NPS standard database software.

Interpretive Collection

The interpretive collection includes a great deal of substantial items such as:

- About 19 pieces of horse-driven ranch machinery such as mowers, rakes, etc. This material is on a 20-year maintenance cycle (presently on hold).
- Blacksmith shop equipment
- Chuck wagon equipment
- Cowboy gear
- Traveling trunk
- Discovery packs

Staff is planning six new hands-on history program traveling trunks, each focusing on a different part of the ranch's story.

Staff identified a need for an additional horse, specifically one that would work well with children.

Staff identified a need for live poultry and a bottle calf as interpretive aids.

The chief wants to set up a cyclic maintenance matrix to document and help meet equipment replacement needs.

Museum Collection

Chris Ford serves as the park Curator. She is aided by Peggy Gow, the park Museum Technician. As funding allows, the park hires seasonal museum aides. As opportunity permits, volunteers also help with the curatorial workload.

The collection includes about 22,000 objects (including an architectural features collection) and about 100 feet of archives.

The park has a new major museum storage facility.

Accessioning and cataloguing work is underway and on schedule.

The Scope of Collections was revised this year, and includes procedures for collection review and possible deaccessioning of some materials.

The Chief Ranger oversees the museum management function.

A finding aid is needed for the Kohrs papers.

The Kohrs papers are intended to be added to the NUCMC (the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections) managed by the National Archives.

Acquisition of storage equipment needs to be completed.

The Regional Director would like the park to explore serving as a central curatorial facility for centrally managing ranching material culture collections for the Service.

This concept would envision GRKO as a "Culture of Ranching Center." This

function is primarily envisioned as a central repository for records, rather than a storage center for objects.

Research

Visitor-Focused Research

Staff needs to know how visitors currently find out about GRKO.

Staff needs to know who the visitors are: basic demographics and why they are interested in the site. This information is needed for on-site visitors and Web visitors.

Staff needs to know more about visitor expectations.

Staff needs to know the relationship between visitor expectation and satisfaction.

Staff needs to know more about how schools want to use this and similar sites, and how park educational efforts can tie more closely to school curricula.

Staff needs an analysis of the Kohrs ranch business records to provide accurate context for thematic interpretation of the ranching operation.

It was noted that the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research at the University of Montana tracks tourism trends and helps identify resources.

Resource-Focused Research

Staff needs to know more about the role of women, American Indians, and other minorities like African Americans, Chinese, and Hispanics in the history of Grant-Kohrs Ranch specifically, and the history of open-range cattle ranching in general.

Staff needs to know more about the influence of cattlemen on the reduction of Indian reservations.

Staff needs to know more about the “average worker” (ranch hands, townsfolk, cooks, common laborers, etc. and how their lives changed decade by decade during the active life of the ranch.

Staff needs to know more about the history of “average” ranchers other than the “cattle barons” like Conrad Kohrs.

Staff needs to know more about the progression of lifestyles of ranchers over time.

Staff needs to know more about the larger economic structure of society over time, and how ranching interacted with and influenced other activities such as mining.

Staff needs to know more about the historical importance of the Warren family operation of the ranch and the transition from open range ranching to contemporary cattle ranching.

Staff needs to know more about the business history of the ranch.

Staff needs to locate more information sources about local and regional history—and abstract these sources for easy use in interpretive training and professional development.

The park needs to generate a scope of work for a Cultural Landscape Report.

Staff needs to analyze the carrying capacity of the ranch under various land-use scenarios. This should be part of an overall use alternatives scenario influencing the maintained cultural landscape of the park.

Staff needs a better understanding of the relationship between the natural resources of the ranch and the history of human use of those resources.
Staff needs to know more about how the land was worked, with what tools and machines, using what techniques, etc.
Staff needs a furnishings plan for the Warren-era buildings.

Interpretive Partnerships

Park partners are critical to the support and/or delivery of interpretive services. Identification of current and potential park partners for interpretation, and the ways they can support the attainment of interpretive goals, enhances the park's ability to strategically use resources to serve the public and achieve management goals.

Potential/Current Partners Specific to Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site

Note: Current park partners appear in bold, potential partners in regular type.

4H

Beef Conservancy

Center for the Rocky Mountain West

Commercial tour companies

Deer Lodge Chamber of Commerce

Deer Lodge Trail Committee

Draft Horse & Mule Association

Elected officials

Family descendants

Future Farmers of America

Glacier Natural History Association

Intermountain Support Office

Kohrs Library

Local Emergency Planning Committee

Local/regional media (Newspapers, radio, television)

Main Street Improvement

Montana Cattlewomen

Montana Committee for the Humanities

Montana Historical Society

Montana State University

Montana Western Rail

National Cattlemen's Beef Association

National Park Foundation

National Parks Conservation Association

Other geographically or thematically related parks

Powell County Progress

Professional associations such as Association of Living History Farms & Museums

Rotary

Teachers

University of Montana

Potential Benefits to the Park from Partnerships

Building help
 Cultural activities
 Curriculum development assistance
 Fundraising
 Interpretive services
 Knowledge and expertise
 Maintenance
 Media announcements and publicity
 Photographs and artwork
 Planning and design assistance
 Service projects
 Training
 Volunteer staff
 Writing and editing

Strategic Approach to Partnering

A strategic examination of partners and assistance they can provide is designed to maximize the effectiveness of working with others to achieve interpretive goals.

Partner	Types of Assistance						
	<i>Fundraisin g</i>	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Advocacy</i>	<i>Research</i>	<i>Distribution of Information</i>	<i>Special Events Assistance</i>	<i>Labor for projects, etc.</i>
4H	•	•	•	•		•	•
Beef Conservancy	•			•	•		
Chamber of Commerce			•		•		
Commercial tour companies					•		
Deer Lodge Trail Committee	•		•	•	•		
Draft Horse & Mule Association			•	•	•	•	•
Elected officials	•		•		•		
Family descendants							
FFA		•		•		•	•
GNHA	•	•	•		•	•	•
Intermount		•	•	•	•	•	•

Main Support Office							
Kohrs Library	•		•	•	•		•
Local Emergency Planning Committee						•	
Local Parks		•	•	•	•	•	
Local/regional media				•	•		
Main Street Improvement					•		
Montana Cattlewomen	•			•	•	•	
Montana Committee for the Humanities	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Montana Historical Society		•	•	•	•	•	
Montana State University		•	•	•			
Montana Western Rail				•			
National Cattlemen's Beef Association	•	•	•	•			
National Park Foundation	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
National Parks Conservation Association	•	•	•				
Powell County Progress			•				
Rotary			•		•		
Teachers			•	•	•		•
University of Montana			•		•		

Cooperating Association Operations

Glacier Natural History Association is a critical partner in providing interpretive services and achieving the desired future interpretive program. A *Scope of Sales Statement*, defining how the cooperating association's sales operations contribute to the communication of the park's primary themes, should be developed in coordination with the *Comprehensive Interpretive Plan*. That document will be included in the Interpretive Database component of the *Comprehensive Interpretive Plan*. (For more information, please see *CIP Guide* or DO-32.)

Operational Considerations Affecting the Desired Future Interpretive Program

A number of major interrelated issues was resolved in a holistic way and incorporated into the park's Individual Service Plans (ISPs) to effectively implement the desired future interpretive program. A summary of ideas regarding the most prominent of these issues follows.

Issues

Facilities, Site Layout, and Interpretive Effectiveness. An analysis needs to be done to examine wayfinding signage from the freeway to the park. Currently, people see the brown recreation sign on the freeway, then don't know where to go once they exit. Additional regional highway signage should be part of this analysis.

As indicated in the Issues section above, a number of considerations are currently impacting interpretive effectiveness. Appreciation of the significance of park resources is strongly dependent on visitors first understanding the historic context of open-range ranching, then the complex and interdependent physical components of a working ranch, and then the orientational realities of their current location vis-à-vis the actual site (and what to expect there). In addition, the historic and still-functioning railroad tracks form an impediment to traffic flow and are a safety hazard.

All of this points to the proposed visitor center as a critical additional component that can go a long way toward addressing these concerns if it is planned wisely. It seems clear that a prime function of the visitor center will need to be providing context and orientation to park visitors, preparing them to effectively explore the ranch complex—and find their way to and from the parking area safely. In addition, the visitor center will allow the park to explore stories for which there is currently no room. The exact location of the visitor center, its parking area, and the route from there to the ranch complex, is yet to be decided. Proximity to the ranch complex, a safe and accessible route of travel from there to the parking area, and sufficient space in the visitor center to allow for orientation and in-depth introduction of all primary interpretive themes should be important factors in the choice of location and conceptual design.

A sense of arrival is sorely lacking at the ranch site presently. A site development plan is needed to consider a more useful, accessible, effective path into the historic zone, such as using the non-active railroad grade or other path. Park staff will need to decide whether this plan should identify placement of the proposed visitor center, or whether to phase in different access routes before and after the realization of such a center.

Visitation, Funding, and Interpretive Services. The current level of park visitation seems clearly to be a small fraction of the potential carrying capacity of the park. An aggressive and strategic advertising program could bring many more visitors to the park. However, providing a rich, hands-on experience to even the current visiting public is a challenge given the very modest park budget and staff size. Since the park collects no fees, increased visitation would not directly enhance the ability of the park to serve their needs. If visitation can be substantially increased, however, even a modest fee for services (an interpretive program in the ranch house, participation in special services, a tour of the curatorial facility, etc.) would greatly expand the park's ability to provide the often staff-intensive services that effectively accomplish hands-on, experiential learning. Therefore, a decision to actively seek increased numbers of visitors should go hand-in-hand with a decision to explore visitor-generated revenue enhancement.

Park staff also identified a need to be better represented in regional tourism literature. An important component of a strategy to increase visitation would be outreach to the local community to candidly explore with park neighbors and local residents the impacts (both positive and negative) of a park and community economic strategy based more intensely on tourism.

Resolution of the issues through an overall strategic approach

Since opening to the public in 1976, Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS has been constrained in providing park visitors with the resources necessary to clearly understand and appreciate the site, its history, and its broader range cattle industry connotations. The need for a visitor center was articulated in the earliest management documents, and remains a central goal in the park's current General Management Plan (GMP). Since 1976 a small visitor contact station located in the park's entrance and development zone has "temporarily"—and wholly inadequately—filled this void.

The GMP identified adaptive use of the 1950 Warren Barn as the place to orient visitors to the ranch; provide information and interpretive services through exhibitry, audiovisual media, and a cooperating association bookstore; and facilitate educational experiences with school classes. The concept would also broaden visitation beyond the traditional May-September use season by enabling public use in the colder fall and winter months.

Fiscal realities may determine a more cost-effective alternative, through construction of a new visitor facility in the park's development zone, which is cheaper than adapting a historic structure of the magnitude of the 12,000-square-foot Warren Barn. However, the overriding consideration in developing a permanent visitor facility at Grant-Kohrs Ranch NHS remains political: originally considered for line-item construction funding, the park has never successfully been able to compete when measured against other funding priorities in the Intermountain Region. Moreover, in recent years Congress has increasingly frowned upon investment in new visitor centers, particularly given the profound backlog in deferred infrastructure maintenance across the national park system.

Given these realities, the park will continue to explore opportunities for developing a permanent visitor center. The interpretive division will work closely with park management and regional interpretive planners to develop a strategy by which this goal, which is absolutely integral to the park's visitor and education services, will be attained. The CIP is a critical first step in identifying the concepts that will drive the planning of the non-personal interpretive services that will constitute the new, permanent visitor facility. In addition, the development of partnerships (including those public constituencies who participated in the CIP process) and formation of a park friends group should be explored, as external advocates for a permanent visitor facility at Grant-Kohrs Ranch.

Until such time as the goal of a permanent visitor facility is achieved, the interpretive division and park management must understand and accept the constraints that will continue to drive interpretation. Those constraints include:

- a continued, necessary reliance on personal interpretive services as being key to the visitor experience;
- public use of the park limited primarily to warm-weather months;
- limited onsite educational services, restricted by climate and the absence of indoor educational resources;
 - and the ongoing lack of multimedia and bookstore resources by which visitors can enhance their onsite experience, and continue to learn after their departure from the park.

DESIRED FUTURE INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

Desired Future Interpretive Program — Program Overview

The program overview displays the interpretive services that constitute the desired future interpretive program. These are the services that are intended to most effectively communicate each of the park's primary interpretive themes to each identified audience in a way that assures balance, effectiveness, and attainability. These services include the following tenets for successful interpretation:

Universal accessibility: The interpretive program includes interpretive services that are designed to be as universally accessible as possible to best meet the varied physical and cognitive needs of interpretive audiences.

Hierarchy of sophistication: The interpretive program treats subject matter in a range of ways — from simple-and-basic to complex-and-advanced — to best meet the varied interests of interpretive audiences.

Range of interpretive services: The interpretive program includes a range of personal and non-personal interpretive services to best meet the varied learning styles of interpretive audiences.

Multiple points of view: The interpretive program treats subject matter from a variety of perspectives to aid in accuracy and relevance to varied interpretive audiences.

Program Overview

The program overview table below indicates the service-location(s) pairs that Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site intends to provide for each theme-audience combination over the life of this plan. The superscript number following each interpretive service (i.e. FY00, FY01, etc.) indicates the first fiscal year that that service is planned to be available.

Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site
Desired Future Interpretive Program — Program Overview

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES	INTERPRETIVE AUDIENCES	
	1: General Audience <i>(Includes farmers and stock growers primarily from the Northwest, but nationally.)</i>	2: School Groups <i>(Includes home schoolers. Special emphasis on grades 4 and 8.)</i>
A: The historical integrity and intactness of Grant-Kohrs Ranch facilitates a deeper understanding of the myths and realities of cattle ranching and the American West.	Web site w/children's page ^{FY2005} at Internet Living history (chuck wagon) ^{FY2003} at Parkwide Guided programs ^{FY2003} at RH Living history ^{FY2003} at BH Thematic overview video ^{FY2006} at PR Self-guided trail ^{FY2004} at Historic ranch zone Scheduled programs ^{FY2003} at LY, SF, C, DHB Roving interpretation ^{FY2003} at Parkwide Overview exhibits ^{FY2003} at VC, upper BS	Curriculum-based lesson plans ^{FY2003} at Internet, mail Curriculum-based education program ^{FY2003} at Parkwide Curriculum teacher packet ^{FY2004} at VC, mail, Web In-park school programs ^{FY2003} at Parkwide Teacher workshops ^{FY2003} at Parkwide, offsite Web site w/children's page ^{FY2005} at Internet Thematic overview video ^{FY2006} at PR Offsite presentation ^{FY2003} at Schools
B: The story of Conrad Kohrs' rise from hopeful emigrant to powerful cattle baron exemplifies the pursuit of the American Dream through flexibility, vision, determination, and good fortune.	Web site w/children's page ^{FY2005} at Internet Guided programs ^{FY2003} at RH Thematic overview video ^{FY2006} at PR Site book ^{FY2007} at CA outlets, commercial outlets Temporary exhibit ^{FY2003} at Offsite community sites Scheduled programs ^{FY2003} at LY, SF, C, DHB Overview exhibits ^{FY2003} at VC, PR Living history (First Person) ^{FY2003} at Ranch house	Curriculum-based lesson plans ^{FY2003} at Internet, mail In-park school programs ^{FY2003} at Parkwide Curriculum-based education program ^{FY2003} at Parkwide Cattle King game ^{FY2005} at CA outlets, teacher packets, web site, parkwide Curriculum teacher packet ^{FY2004} at VC, mail, Web Living history (First Person) ^{FY2003} at Ranch house Web site w/children's page ^{FY2003} at Internet Thematic overview video ^{FY2006} at PR
C: Due largely to the foresight and preservation efforts of Conrad and Nell Warren, Grant-Kohrs Ranch offers unparalleled opportunity to experience an authentic, living, evolving western ranch—encompassing historic landscapes, original buildings, furnishings, implements, and records spanning 130 years—rare in its integrity and completeness.	Scheduled programs ^{FY2003} at Parkwide Web site w/children's page ^{FY2005} at Internet Guided programs ^{FY2003} at RH, Agricultural zone Waysides ^{FY2007} at Access Trail Temporary exhibit ^{FY2003} at PR, TB Self-guided trail ^{FY2005} at Agricultural zone Thematic overview video ^{FY2006} at PR Roving interpretation ^{FY2003} at Parkwide Overview exhibits ^{FY2003} at VC, upper BS Offsite programs ^{FY2003} at Community sites Living history (chuck wagon) ^{FY2003} at Parkwide	Curriculum-based lesson plans ^{FY2003} at Internet, mail Curriculum-based education program ^{FY2003} at Parkwide Web site w/children's page ^{FY2004} at Internet Thematic overview video ^{FY2006} at PR Cattle King game ^{FY2005} at CA outlets, teacher packets, web site, parkwide Traveling trunk ^{FY2003} at Mail, pick up Offsite presentation for older students ^{FY2003} at Schools In-park school programs ^{FY2003} at Parkwide

<p>D: The history of Grant-Kohrs Ranch offers insights into how an enterprise often attributed to the effort of one person or family is inextricably tied to many people of diverse talents and backgrounds working together for individual and mutual advantage.</p>	<p>Living history^{FY2003} at BH, BSS, DHB Web site w/children's page^{FY2004} at Internet Living history (chuck wagon)^{FY2003} at Parkwide Guided programs^{FY2003} at Parkwide, local community sites Offsite programs^{FY2003} at Community sites Special events^{FY2003} at Parkwide, local community sites Scheduled programs^{FY2003} at LY, SF, C, DHB Roving interpretation^{FY2003} at Parkwide Furnishings exhibits w/audio^{FY2007} at BH, TR, DB, BSS Thematic overview video^{FY2006} at PR Temporary exhibit^{FY2003} at Offsite community sites Site bulletins^{FY2003} at VC, Web site, selected locations in park Self-guided trail^{FY2003} at Historic ranch zone Newsletter^{FY2003} at Mail</p>	<p>Curriculum-based lesson plans^{FY2003} at Internet, mail Teacher workshops^{FY2003} at Parkwide, offsite Curriculum-based education program^{FY2003} at Parkwide Internships (interpretation-driven research)^{FY2003} at Research facilities on and off site In-park school programs^{FY2003} at Parkwide Web site w/children's page^{FY2004} at Internet Thematic overview video^{FY2006} at PR Self-guiding teacher packet^{FY2004} at VC, mail, Web Offsite presentation^{FY2003} at Schools Cattle King game^{FY2005} at CA outlets, teacher packets, web site, parkwide</p>
<p>E: The deliberate preservation of Grant-Kohrs Ranch by Conrad and Nell Warren—including original buildings, records, artifacts, and landscapes—represents values of historical awareness and respect, and connects to the larger idea of cultural memory and its preservation.</p>	<p>Waysides^{FY2006} at Warren complex Quarterly newspaper column^{FY2005} at Silver State Post Web site w/children's page^{FY2005} at Internet Newsletter^{FY2003} at Mail Interpretation of preservation activities^{FY2003} at Parkwide Guided programs^{FY2003} at RH, CF, BH Thematic overview video^{FY2006} at PR Temporary exhibit^{FY2003} at Offsite community sites Site bulletins^{FY2003} at VC, Web site, selected locations in park Scheduled programs^{FY2003} at LY, SF, C, DHB, CF Exhibits^{FY2005} at DB, granary, TB Offsite programs^{FY2003} at Community sites Media feature stories^{FY2003} at Silver State Post Junior Rancher program^{FY2003} at VC</p>	<p>Internships^{FY2005} at Research facilities on and off site Curriculum-based lesson plans^{FY2003} at Internet, mail Web site w/children's page^{FY2005} at Internet Curriculum-based education program (incl. preservation activities)^{FY2003} at Parkwide Thematic overview video^{FY2006} at PR Teacher workshops^{FY2003} at Parkwide, offsite Offsite presentation^{FY2003} at Schools</p>

National Park System and NPS Mission	<p> Thematic overview video ^{FY2006} at PR Newsletter ^{FY2003} at Mail Web site w/children's page ^{FY2005} at Internet Temporary exhibit ^{FY2003} at Offsite community sites, parkwide Quarterly newspaper column ^{FY2004} at Silver State Post Offsite programs ^{FY2003} at Community sites Junior Rancher program ^{FY2003} at VC Message Project products ^{FY2003} at Parkwide Media feature stories ^{FY2003} at Silver State Post Interpretation of preservation activities ^{FY2003} at Parkwide </p> <p><i>Note: All services include incidental System and Service information.</i></p>	<p> Traveling Cow project ^{FY2005} at Internet, mail Offsite presentation (i.e. National Park Week) ^{FY2003} at Schools Thematic overview video ^{FY2006} at PR Temporary exhibit ^{FY2003} at Offsite community sites In-park school programs ^{FY2003} at Parkwide </p> <p><i>Note: All services include incidental System and Service information.</i></p>
Orientation and Safety Information	<p> Information desk services ^{FY2003} at VC Waysides ^{FY2007} at VC parking area Rack card ^{FY2003} at CoC, welcome centers, community businesses, CA outlets, other NPS sites Bulletin board ^{FY2003} at VC, restrooms Unigrid folder ^{FY2007} at VC, mail Web site w/children's page and links ^{FY2004} at Internet Sandwich board ^{FY2003} at Community sites Portable safety signs ^{FY2003} at VC, RH, railroad car Park newspaper ^{FY2003} at Mail, VC, CoC, Welcome Centers, community businesses, CA outlets, other NPS sites </p> <p><i>Note: All services include incidental orientation and safety information.</i></p>	<p> --- Curriculum teacher packet ^{FY2004} at VC, mail, Web --- Safety talk w/visual aids ^{FY2003} at Outside VC near kiosk </p> <p><i>Note: All services include incidental orientation and safety information.</i></p>

Desired Future Interpretive Program — Individual Service Plans (ISPs)

The individual service plans are located in the Interpretive Database component of the park's *Comprehensive Interpretive Plan*. The set of ISPs will become more and more complete as actual information regarding specific planned services becomes available.

Long-Range Schedule of Actions

The schedule of long-range actions is used to coordinate the planning and development of the interpretive services needed to accomplish the desired future interpretive program. The year-specific portions of this schedule of actions are also used to generate the schedules of year-specific actions found in successive Annual Implementation Plans.

FY03 – Completed Actions

- Produced curriculum-based lesson plans on the park's web site.
- Developed cultural and resource management page.
- Organized and facilitated teacher workshop.
- Produced park newsletter.
- Redeveloped the junior ranger program.
- Redeveloped the self-guided tour booklet.
- Developed a finding aid for the Kohrs papers.
- Assessed how schools want to use this and similar sites, and how park educational efforts can tie more closely to school curricula.
- Developed a new hands-on history program traveling trunk, focusing on a different part of the ranch's story.
- Researched the "average worker" (ranch hands, townsfolk, cooks, common laborers, etc. and how their lives changed decade by decade during the active life of the ranch.
- Researched the history of "average" ranchers other than the "cattle barons" like Conrad Kohrs.
- Assessed the historical importance of the Warren family operation of the ranch and the transition from open range ranching to contemporary cattle ranching.
- Generated a scope of work for a Cultural Landscape Report.
- Surveyed library materials to identify rare books; Transfer to the museum collection and store accordingly.
- Acquired live poultry and a bottle calf as interpretive aids.
- Removed the old State of Montana wooden sign at the parking lot restroom site.

FY04 – Current Actions

- Make additional park donation box on the ranch grounds.
- Complete Kohrs Finding Aid
- Develop preservation Web pages
- Develop park newsletter
- Work with Museum Management in D.C. to produce collections website
- Complete and print “Four Ranchers, Self-Guided Supplement, and Jr Ranger booklets for distribution in V.C.
- Develop a workshop teacher packet/flyer.
- Make additional park donation box on the ranch grounds.
- Transfer library materials to the Library of Congress catalog system, the NPS standard. The support office staff in Santa Fe is a resource that can assist.
- Complete acquisition of curatorial storage equipment.
- Add the Kohrs papers to the NUCMC (the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections) managed by the National Archives.
- Decide on a new location for the current park orientation map wayside panel and a large arrowhead in that vicinity.
- Identify deficiencies in park information regarding the role of women, American Indians, and other minorities like African Americans, Chinese, and Hispanics in the history of Grant-Kohrs Ranch specifically, and the history of open-range cattle ranching in general.

FY05 – Proposed Actions

- Develop a children’s web page.
- Develop a script for the new thematic overview video.
- Work with GNHA and the Warrens to reprint Kohr’s autobiography.
- Develop the “Cattle King Game,” to be incorporated into the traveling trunk.
- Develop a “traveling cow” project for students to pass on from school to school.
- Develop a self-guiding trail of the agricultural zone.
- Work with local universities and other organizations to develop internship projects at the ranch.
- Develop a script for the new thematic overview video.
- Schedule and complete a furnishings plan for the Warren-era buildings.
- Transfer current finding aid for images (a flat-file database on dBase) to a database using Microsoft Access or the next generation NPS standard database software.
- Review images, eliminate useless images, and digitize and/or duplicate remaining master images to facilitate cataloguing and proper use.

- Analyze the Kohrs ranch business records to provide accurate context for thematic interpretation of the ranching operation.
- Research the influence of cattlemen on the reduction of Indian reservations.
- Research and develop “overview exhibits” for the visitor center and upper buggy shed.
- Learn more about how the land was worked, with what tools and machines, using what techniques, etc.
- Produce wayside exhibits for the Warren complex.
- Work with Silver State Post to develop a quarterly newspaper column about the ranch.

FY06 – Proposed Actions

- Work with film companies in finalizing the video script and begin shooting the video footage.
- Research for potential partners to assist in development of a site history book.
- Survey the current collection and identify and acquire new research and reference materials related to the ranch and its resources.
- Set up a cyclic maintenance matrix to document and help meet equipment replacement needs.
- Explore serving as a central curatorial facility for centrally managing ranching material culture collections for the Service. This concept would envision GRKO as a “Culture of Ranching Center.” This function is primarily envisioned as a central repository for records, rather than a storage center for objects.

FY07 – Proposed Actions

- Finalize thematic overview video for production.
- Develop and produce a site history book.
- Research and develop new wayside exhibits. (for new visitor center)
- Research possible auditory exhibits for furnishing displays in the new visitor center.
- Survey who the visitors are: basic demographics and why they are interested in the site. This information is needed for on-site visitors and Web visitors.
- Study how visitors currently find out about GRKO.
- Survey visitor expectations.
- Study the relationship between visitor expectation and satisfaction.